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MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Information Technology
Member of Consultative Committee on Finance
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22 November, 2011

Dear Shri Antony

In a landmark decision move to help reduce veterans' unemployment, the US Senate has recently passed a Bill that will grant tax incentives to companies who agree to hire veterans. The Bill has been passed by a unanimous vote, and will shortly be signed into law by the President of the USA. The provisions of this Bill also include providing specialized job training and counselling to veterans leaving the service.

This revolutionary move by the US Government exhibits the nation's commitment towards the welfare of its veterans, to ensure that no veteran who has fought for the nation should have to fight for a job when they go back home.

As you are aware, a large number of the Armed Forces personnel in India are retired / released every year at a comparatively young age, in order to maintain a youthful profile of the Armed Forces. Consequently, at the time of retirement, majority of service personnel are at an age where they are required to take up a second occupation owing to their family / social responsibilities.

Throughout the history of Independent India, our country has faced many threats and challenges - both external and internal. Through all these years and challenges, the men and women of our Armed forces and their families have consistently and unflinchingly defended our country and its people.

The Government should seriously consider passing a US-like legislation to boost employment opportunities for our Armed Forces veterans. Supporting these proud men and their families - who have served the country with dignity and distinction - is our duty. Such a legislation will go a long way in assuring them that the nation truly values their sacrifices and services, and they don't have to fight for employment opportunities when they retire and return home.

I am introducing a Private Members' Bill – The Armed Forces Covenant Bill, 2011 – during the current Parliament session, which could be the basis of such a legislation. Through you, I urge the Government to seriously consider supporting this Bill with suitable amendments, as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

Shri A. K. Antony
Hon'ble Minister of Defence
Government of India
New Delhi